After a year of reflection and preparation, ULYP delivered its first Back to Basics program in April and May. Back to Basics is designed to assist vocational students in the development of the entrepreneurial, leadership, professional and communication skills necessary to successfully transition into the workplace.

The pilot was implemented with ULYP’s partner, INJAZ Lebanon, who gave us their expertise in equipping youth with Work Readiness, Financial Literacy, and Entrepreneurial skills. These components were integrated with the skills of decision-making, teamwork, communication, citizenship and peace-building that are at the core of all ULYP’s programs.

60 young men and women aged 17-20 from the UNWRA Sibline Vocational Center and the Mowasat organization in Saida participated in the pilot. ULYP and INJAZ Lebanon’s assessment validated the need for this program, and confirmed its impact on shifting the youth’s perception to empower them as responsible citizens of the future. The participants voiced that they are now better prepared to develop their resumes, sit for interviews, and respond to ethical dilemmas in the workplace. They felt encouraged to apply for jobs and said they now comprehend what it takes to succeed in the workplace and beyond.

ULYP is now incorporating Back to Basics into the core programs of its Youth Academy. ULYP and INJAZ Lebanon will continue refining, developing and delivering this program together. Congratulations to the pioneer group who piloted this program and best of luck in your new endeavors! We will certainly see you again.

This quarter, the MOMs program was slightly different: it was longer, more intense and focused mainly on English language. For the first time ULYP partnered up with HAYYA BINA who worked with us within the TWE (Teaching Women English) program, which is funded by the Department of Public Diplomacy and Cultural Affairs at the US Embassy in Beirut. Hayya Bina brought new teaching materials and trained our teachers to enhance their skills.

23 mothers from different backgrounds and communities worked hard together to improve their skills in all elements of English. The highlight of the Women’s English program consisted of the TWE curriculum, including computer skills, career coaching, mentoring, physical fitness, early childhood development and life coaching. The theme for this program was “Empowering Women to Self-Empower Themselves”. Through the TWE program, women have been able to effect positive change in themselves and the physical wellbeing of their children. They met the challenge patiently and enthusiastically and were able to overcome the hurdles to succeed. We are pleased to learn from the women that their relationships within their households and communities are growing and developing. Congratulations to our mothers and a big THANK YOU to our partner, Haya Bina.

As a follow-up, ULYP seeks opportunities for the mothers to continue learning and facilitates their enrollment in programs and with organizations within our network. For the second time, AJYALUNA offered 14 slots to MOMs program participants to enroll in their 3 months nursing program. ULYP is currently working with the moms to coordinate their admission to this program.
Volunteer Spotlight: Claus von Bohlen

I came to ULYP having recently completed a psychology degree in San Francisco. I had decided to resume my nascent Arabic studies in Beirut, and also to look for an English teaching position. I wanted to volunteer in an active NGO while in Lebanon and learned about ULYP from the founder’s daughter. I applied and got accepted and ended up doing a four month internship with ULYP. I supported the admin team in the office work as well as taught in the BRIDGE program’s SAT preparation course.

I enjoyed my time at ULYP, though I will not deny that at times I found the teaching quite challenging. The SAT exam is not an attractive exam at the best of times. It tests cognitive skills rather than creativity or original thought, and as someone with a background in humanistic psychology, that does not sit particularly well with me. On the other hand, I do understand that the exam has its own purpose.

Teaching students from Palestinian camps was a learning experience for me too. I learned something about myself. For instance, on one occasion I devoted part of a lesson to some career guidance counseling. I prepared factsheets about the architecture degree at AUB and asked the students a few follow up questions. One question was: ‘What is your favorite building, and why?’ One of the best students in my class put up his hand and told me that he didn’t understand the question. I was perplexed, since I was sure he knew all the words. However, it transpired that he didn’t have a favorite building. In my mind, I scrolled through the buildings I have seen that have most impressed me: the Guggenheim in Bilbao, the Empire State building, the Taj Mahal. But then I realized that my students had never left Lebanon, and that coming from Ain el Hilweh to AUST, who were partnering with ULYP on delivering the courses, was possibly the longest journey he had ever undertaken. Quite possibly, he had never seen a building that had been designed with anything other than pure functionality in mind. It made me realize how many assumptions I carry around, and also how lucky I am.

I was sad to say goodbye to my class. It was a challenging course to teach, but I found the students very likeable, and I feel a warm sense of affection for them.

I enjoyed meeting the ULYP team and working with them. I felt that there was a good atmosphere in the office, and the people who work there are committed and competent. I hope I have made some lasting friendships, and I am grateful for the opportunity I was given, and for the trust and warmth that I felt. I am also grateful to the AUST team with whom I taught for their support and friendly attitude.

I intend to return to Beirut in September, in order to teach philosophy and English literature at Brummana high school and of course, keep in touch and help ULYP in any way I can. In the meantime, I continue to work on a new novel.

New Volunteers

This summer ULYP has taken on many new volunteers, both independently and from our partner organizations. We would like to welcome Coco Burch; Jade Zoghbi and Stephan Beavers from the Arab American Institute; the DUKE Engage team. Coco, Jade and Stephan will be working in ULYP’s office, while for the second year running the DUKE Engage volunteers will be teaching SAT preparation and English for the BRIDGE program. Welcome to ULYP!

ULYP would also like to say goodbye to Amanda Wiseman who went back to her home in the USA to have a baby. Thanks for all your hard work and good luck!
Both Hiba Mawed and Alaa Othman were granted scholarships from the generous donation of Mrs. Rima Hourani, which allowed them to study nursing at the Lebanese American University (LAU).

We asked Alaa for her thoughts on winning the award: I cannot tell you how much this award means to me; it is an honor and I value it highly. Graduating with such an award, which represents the faculty’s recognition of my professional approach to nursing, is a great booster that encourages my professional and educational development. I am looking forward to continuing my master’s degree after one year of experience in this field. I hope by that time to become a clinical instructor in order to spread the message of caring that is the art and science of nursing.

Alaa was awarded the President’s Circle Award from the Alice Ramez Chagoury School of Nursing in recognition of her professional presentation, delivery of patient-centered nursing care, and strong academics. This Award is given every year to one graduating nursing student, selected by the faculty.

We asked a recent graduate of ULYP’s BRIDGE Program, Aya Bahij, who attended the SAT prep program and applied to university abroad to reflect on her experience in the program – here is what she said:

I found the instructors on the BRIDGE program to be really dedicated. The course was very valuable to me in allowing me to practice my English accent with an English teacher, which helped me gain confidence for the official SAT exam. I really enjoyed meeting all of the nice students from different schools who were really interested in studying and improving themselves. Mr. Claus, the ULYP volunteer teacher, gave us many important English and life lessons. There was really nothing that I did not enjoy about the program because the classes were so interesting and lively. I learned a lot of new vocabulary, and many rules about English grammar which I had never properly learned such as tenses, suffixes, prefixes, and subject-verb agreement. The course will help me achieve higher scores on my SAT and I hope this will make me a more competitive candidate for my college applications. Last but not least I made many lasting friendships with students from all over Lebanon.

I am so excited about heading abroad next year, and I am so glad that I’ll be able to introduce my country and culture to students from different countries around the world. I know that I will make my country, family, and teachers proud of me as well, and hope to change many of the negative ideas about my homeland, Palestine, and about Arab culture.

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INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING?

If you are interested in volunteering with ULYP, please send your CV to us at ulypvolunteers@gmail.com and we will send you our volunteer application.

"Volunteers don’t get paid, not because they are worthless, but because they are priceless”

Please donate! Sponsor a program or a student.
Your donations and support make the impossible possible.

Please donate to ULYP so we can continue providing the marginalized children, youth and women of Lebanon opportunities to accept, tolerate, respect, trust and care for each other.
To help us work towards a more united Lebanon, you can fill out the form below and return it to us or join our online campaign.

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3 EASY STEPS

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TOGETHER we can give our youth a life of HOPE, KNOWLEDGE and OPPORTUNITIES

BE ACTIVE...MAKE A DIFFERENCE

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